Lab Leader Cross Examination

You can either clarify or get concessions.

CX is the most game-like part of the round.

1. Create perceptual dominance over your opponent. In round, it is very obvious to a judge when one debater knows more or seems smarter. Where you stand during CX is key. Small people should try to be in front of larger opponents. Also, you need to know your case and seem well-informed.
2. When conducting CX, you need to get small concessions out of your opponents. These concessions help you set up your rebuttals. This also means that you must have realistic expectations of how to use CX time. Avoid the pitfall of letting your opponent make new arguments. Don’t give your opponent time to re-explain things unless you need the clarification. To avoid that problem, be controlling but not a jerk. Politely cut people off and move the cross examination forward when your opponent starts rambling.
3. Clarification questions: Ask people to repeat things from their case. Ask to see the case during prep time. Always have your opponent saying yes. Clarify with a purpose. Then, continue to extrapolate on your clarifications until you get a concession. Don’t always go for the huge argument. Setting up small arguments to establish a decision calculus can be just as helpful. Have a purpose.
4. Set up burdens: You get very high speaker points because the judges see you aren’t wasting any time. Also, you seem like you really know what you’re doing.
5. Cross-examination is super important on the state and Nationals circuit. Presentation and commanding take precedent. It’s the only time when debaters talk to each other. Also, it is more acceptable to be abusive on lay circuits.
6. Always leave CX with a clear conception of your opponent’s case and a sense that you’re close to concessions.
7. While answering CX, actually answer questions, or you will get theory run on you, and judges won’t understand you. Also, don’t be a jerk: if people ask clarification questions, then clarify. Use it as additional time to sell your case. Also, try to see the path they’re leading you down and then cut off the route. Be honest, concise, and practical. If somebody asks you a question that doesn’t relate to the round, be polite and explain why it doesn’t relate to the round.